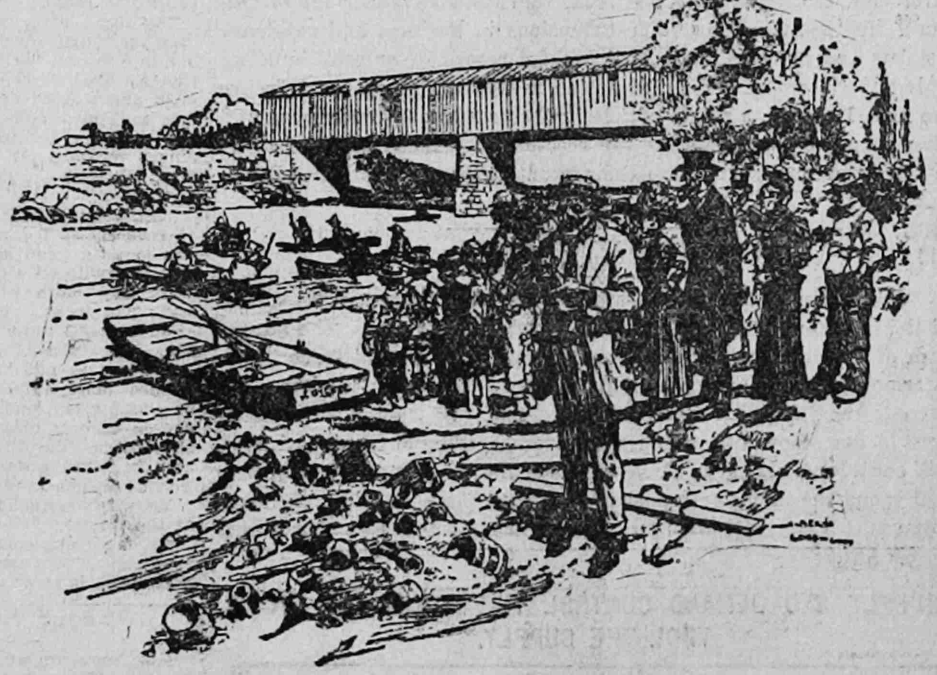


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"Have ye ever been to Paris, Mister Billings?" he



And then, just as Davis had about decided that his health was giving out entirely, his only compositor wandered out of town and never came back. For two weeks Davis struggled along weakly, trying to set type as well as hustle news and keep an eye on Old Billings; and the day he took to his bed, deciding that he was going to die of it all, Casey wandered into Kilo and hunted up the *Times* office—which wasn't very hard to find—and struck Davis for a job.



You can do a good deal with a vest if you know how, and have had a thorough, modern journalistic education, and can pick up a stray chicken that needs its head chopped off for the good of the public. There is enough blood in a chicken to make a strong, agile murder mystery if it is applied in the right way; and the way Casey had Davis organize the search party to scour the woods on the other side of the river from where the coat had been found, did credit to his training. Kilo had not been mentioned in the big city papers since the cyclone of '78, but the day after Old Billings' rest was

That night Davis sat alone in his office with his head in his hands and a frown on his brow. He was deeply worried. He could not decide which headlines to run in red ink at the top of the next day's issue of the "Times," whether to run "Strange Aberration" or "The Lost Returns." Then suddenly he smiled and scribbled across the pad before him the huge words "Mysterious Disappearance." For Casey had left Kilo suddenly, and without stopping to say good-by, or to pay his board bill at the Kilo Hotel.